

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. (currently amended) A blower comprising:  
a carrying frame provided with a base plate;  
a fan comprising a fan housing mounted on the carrying frame, wherein the fan housing has an intake opening that faces the base plate and is spaced from the base plate and wherein an intake gap is formed between the base plate and the fan housing;  
an internal combustion engine driving the fan in order to take in working air through the intake opening and to blow out the working air through a blower tube;  
a leaf shield for preventing leaves and debris from entering the fan housing, wherein the leaf shield covers the intake gap;  
wherein the leaf shield is comprised of a foam material having coarse pores;  
wherein the leaf shield is a monolithic foam material block having a central air chamber adjoining the intake opening of the fan housing.
2. (original) The blower according to claim 1 configured as a backpack blower.
3. (original) The blower according to claim 1, wherein the foam material is an open-pore foam.
4. (canceled)
5. (currently amended) The blower according to claim 1 [[4]], wherein the central air chamber is a cylindrical opening having a center axis positioned substantially perpendicularly to an intake direction of the working air into the intake opening.
6. (original) The blower according to claim 1, wherein the foam material of the leaf shield is secured between the base plate and the fan housing.
7. (original) The blower according to claim 1, wherein the foam material is clamped between the base plate and the fan housing.
8. (original) The blower according to claim 1, wherein the foam material is secured by positive fit between the base plate and the fan housing.
9. (original) The blower according to claim 8, wherein the fan housing is secured by fastening screws to the base plate and wherein the fastening screws penetrate the foam material.
10. (original) The blower according to claim 9, wherein the leaf shield is a

monolithic foam material block having a central air chamber adjoining the intake opening of the fan housing, wherein two of the fastening screws are provided, and wherein the two fastening screws are positioned diametrically opposed to one another relative to a circumference of the air chamber.

11. (original) The blower according to claim 9, wherein the leaf shield is a monolithic foam material block having a central air chamber adjoining the intake opening of the fan housing, wherein the fastening screws are arranged about a circumference of the air chamber at substantially identical circumferential spacing relative to one another.